

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
EUGENE DISTRICT OFFICE

DECISION DOCUMENTATION and FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Pataha Thinning Timber Sale
Environmental Assessment No. OR090-EA-98-19
Sale Tract No. E-99-124

BACKGROUND

The Bureau of Land Management prepared an environmental assessment (EA) which analyzed the effects of this proposed action and alternatives. The EA and a preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were made available for public comment in June 1998. No public comments were received.

After the EA was made available for public comment, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) listed the Oregon Coast evolutionary significant unit of coho salmon as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. A BLM determination of a "No Effect" was presented to the Level 1 Team in June 1999, and they agreed with the determination.

FINDINGS OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of the information contained in the EA (OR090-98-19), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the *Record of Decision (ROD) for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (April 1994)*, and the *Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (June 1995)*, with which this EA is in conformance, and does not, in and of itself, constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

DECISION

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action, and associated design features as described in the Pataha Thinning EA (No. OR090-98-19).

Implementation of this decision will result in forest management including road improvement and commercial thinning. The project design features identified in the EA (page 4) will be implemented to avoid or reduce environmental impacts.

The selected alternative is in conformance with the following documents:

Record of Decision (ROD) for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (April 1994)

Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (June 1995)

DECISION RATIONALE

The Proposed Action was selected because it best meets the need to maintain progeny test sites for continuation of long-term genetics research.

The Eugene District Leadership Team approved an issue paper on progeny test thinning in March 1993. A project request on management of progeny test sites was submitted to Regional Ecosystem Office (REO) for review in July, 1995. The REO referred the project to the Research and Monitoring Committee (RMC) for review. The RMC concluded, that while some activities are inconsistent with the goals of the Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs) of the Northwest Forest Plan (ROD), the activities are appropriate under a research exception. The review did not identify any significant risks to the objectives of the S&Gs that would require modification or cancellation of the project. The Proposed Action is one of several progeny test sites thinned on the Eugene District in the last 4 years. Three progeny test sites were thinned in 1995, and two progeny sites were thinned in 1997, and two progeny test sites (Pataha and Smith Creek) would be thinned in 1999, or 2000. The proposals for the Pataha Thinning were analyzed by a Interdisciplinary Team in April 1998. An EA was completed in June 1998.

The project area is defined as poor habitat for red tree voles (*Phenacomys longicaudus*). No surveys were required under the interim guidance in effect at the time of sale layout. However, surveys for red tree voles were completed on the project area in Spring 1999. None were found.

Protocol surveys for mollusks were conducted in the fall of 1997 and spring of 1998. As a result, 3 sites, within the proposed action, would receive buffers.

No Threatened, Endangered, or other BLM special status vascular plant species were located, although one Protection Buffer species, *Ulota megalospora*, was found. One site was reserved from cutting inside the thinning area.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

No formal consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was required on this action.

A determination of a "No Effect" was presented to the Level 1 Team, Oregon Coast Range Province, in June 1999. The Level 1 Team agreed with the determination.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The availability of the EA and preliminary FONSI was advertised on June 24, 1998 in the Eugene Register-Guard for a 30-day public review period. Copies of the EA and preliminary FONSI were mailed to interested individuals and organizations. No comments were received.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

The decision to implement the timber sale portion of this project may be protested under 43 CFR 5003 - Administrative Remedies. In accordance with 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for the timber sale portion of this project will not be subject to protest until the notice of sale is first published in the Eugene Register-Guard on June 30, 1999. This published notice of sale will constitute the decision document for the purpose of protests of the timber sale portion of this project. 43 CFR 5003.2(b). Protests of the timber sale portion of this decision must be filed with this office within 15 days after first publication of the notice of sale.

Signed by Gary Hoppe, acting, Field Manager, Coast Range Resource Area on June 29, 1999